



Written Testimony for the Connecticut General Assembly
In Support of Senate Bill 352: An Act Concerning Extending
The Moratorium of Program Approval

Respectfully Submitted by:
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I am honored to have this opportunity to address you today. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute has been a member of the Connecticut community since 1955, and is proud of its more than 20,000 alumni/ae in Connecticut. While the main campus is located in Troy, New York, Rensselaer Hartford has maintained a separate charter in the state of Connecticut since its inception. Rensselaer Hartford delivers programs in science, technology and engineering, at the graduate level, to employers and individual students throughout New England from its Hartford campus.

While considering extension of the moratorium, please consider our unique circumstances – because Rensselaer is accredited by Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE - the accreditor for universities in New York) as a complete institution and not by New England Association of Schools and Colleges, we are required to submit each and every curriculum change to the Office of Higher Education for approval, disallowing quick movement to meet unique employer needs. Adjusting the moratorium to include independent universities chartered in Connecticut (without regard to regional accreditor) would greatly facilitate Rensselaer Hartford's ability to meet employer needs.

A Connecticut-based employer recently told us they need engineers who have additional combinations of cybersecurity and data analytics to meet their workforce needs. Another employer seeks a certificate that combines elements of machine learning, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. While Rensselaer has all of these courses approved in separate programs, to provide them in a combined certificate format would require Rensselaer Hartford to submit for approval for this – and any other – certificate. Given the types of technical combinations employers are looking for – and the quick time frames in which they want them – this requirement hinders our ability to meet employer needs.

In direct conversations with employers, we receive requests for many areas in which Rensselaer has significant research strength and existing programs – biomanufacturing, data science, cybersecurity, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, blockchain, supply chain analytics, model based design, complex systems design, amongst many others. To recombine curriculum quickly customized to the employer's needs, we need the flexibility to recombine curriculum without seeking approval for each possible combination. Rensselaer Hartford has aggressive plans to deliver these programs to employers throughout the United States – from Hartford, employing professionals in Hartford, and therefore seeks consideration to enable us to take advantage of the moratorium extension.

Rensselaer Hartford is fully accredited by MSCHE, and also maintains professional program-by-program accreditation from organizations such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and the American Chemical Society (ACS).

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today.

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